

Points of Interest

Island of Ireland Peace Park

This project, incorporating the building of a round tower, by "A Journey of Reconciliation Trust", was built from July to November 1998. The Irish President Mary Mc Aleese, in the presence of the British Queen Elizabeth II and the Belgian King Albert II, officially opened the Park on 11th November 1998. The tower symbolises the memory of all soldiers of the Island of Ireland who fought and died in the Great War and also symbolises the reconciliation of all people on the island of



Ireland.

The New Zealand Memorial

King Albert I unveiled the white stone obelisk on 1st August 1924. Two German blockhouses are situated in the park. The monument is in honour of all the New Zealanders who were killed on 7th June 1917. Since 1975, Messines fraternizes with the small New Zealand town of Featherston, where 8.000 soldiers were trained for the Great War.

The London Scottish Memorial (Wijtschate)

This monument was erected in remembrance of the battle of 30th October - 3rd November 1914, during which the Regiment fought the first infantry battle by territorials in Belgium. The London Scottish lost 394 of their 700 men. King Albert I unveiled the monument in May 1924. The British-American film star Ronald Colman who was enlisted in this regiment was wounded in this battle.

The Saint Nicolas Church

The church, with its domed tower, can be seen from miles away. The building was restored to its pre-war state in 1928. This church originally served as an abbey church for the convent of Saint



Benedict

and was erected by countess Adela of France. The church is adorned with a magnificent chandelier (1,94 metres wide) in yellow copper and many wall lights, designed for and given to the church by Otto Meyer, a German veteran who survived the battle of Messines.

The Crypt

This 11th century roman crypt is the only monument in Messines that is officially classified and protected. Countess Adela was buried here on 8th January 1079. She was the daughter of the French King Robert the Pious, wife of Baldwin V (Count of Flanders), mother of the English Queen Mathilda and thus "ancestress" of the British Royal Family. The crypt, where the Germans installed their headquarters, was restored in 1931 in its original state after the devastations of World War I.

The Peace Carillon

The carillon in the church tower has 59 bells. The first bell of peace (weighs more than 280 pounds) was inaugurated on 17th May 1985 in Ypres by Pope John Paul II. The carillon can be heard every 15 minutes, ringing out hymns from the nations that took part in World War I.

Messines Ridge British Cemetery

In all, 1.503 soldiers are buried here: 985 British, 322 Australian, 115 New Zealand and 56 South-African soldiers. All of them were killed in action in 1914 - 1918. Only 549 bodies could be identified. On this cemetery you will also find a Memorial to the missing, with 840 names of missing New Zealand soldiers, killed in action in and around Messines in 1917 - 1918.

Bethleem Farm East Cemetery

This cemetery counts 43 graves, 42 Australian and one British, all killed in action in 1917. It's one of the smallest British cemeteries. At the Bethleem Farm, the 25-year old German corporal Adolf Hitler stayed from December 1914 till February 1915. He made a painting of the ruins of the church. A copy of this painting can be seen in the Historical Museum.

Bethleem Farm West Cemetery

This cemetery counts 166 graves: 24 British, 114 Australian and 26 New Zealand soldiers, all killed in action in 1917. There is however also a grave of one British soldier, killed in action during the Second World War.

Japanese Peace Post

On 17th September 1989, Miss Mié Tabbé, an artist from Hiroshima, unveiled this peace post, given to Messines by the Japanese Peace Movement, with its powerful message: "May peace rule the World".

Museum: The Historical Museum of Messines is closed due to inventarisation, renovation and rethinking the concept for the future. The former town hall (where the museum is located) will be restaured in his original form and there will be a new visitors information point that will host the collection of the museum. We hope to be ready for the centennial remembrance of World War One.